



# ARIZONA

STATE PARKS & TRAILS





# Arizona Trails Plan 2020

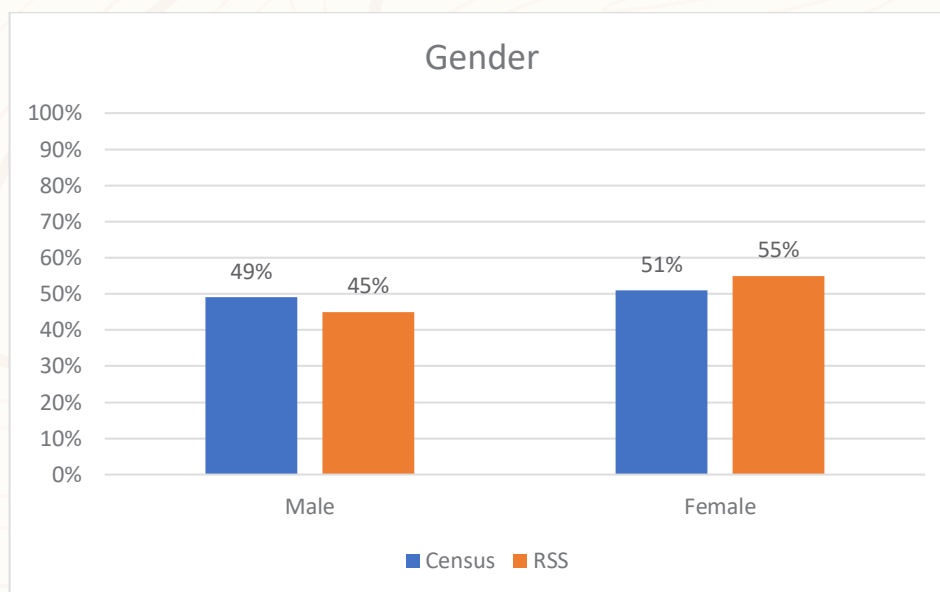
## Maricopa County Report

### Introduction:

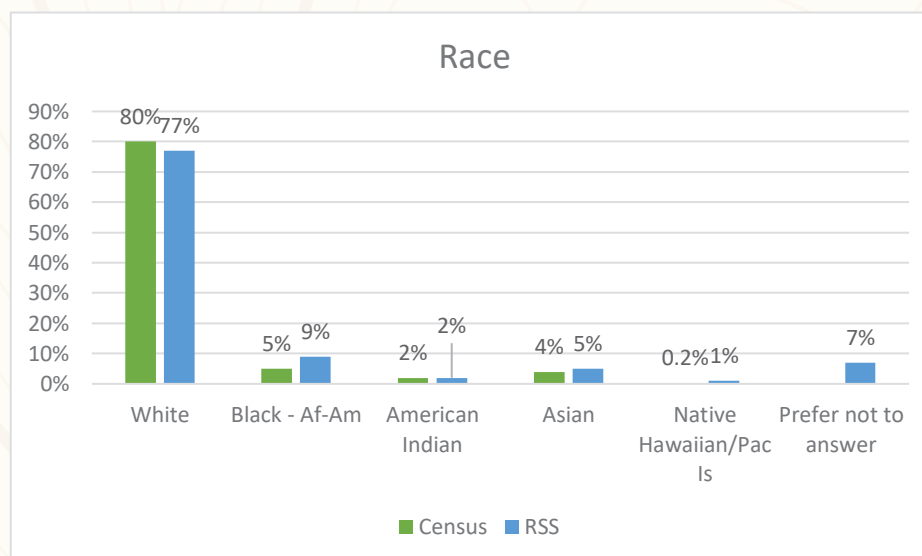
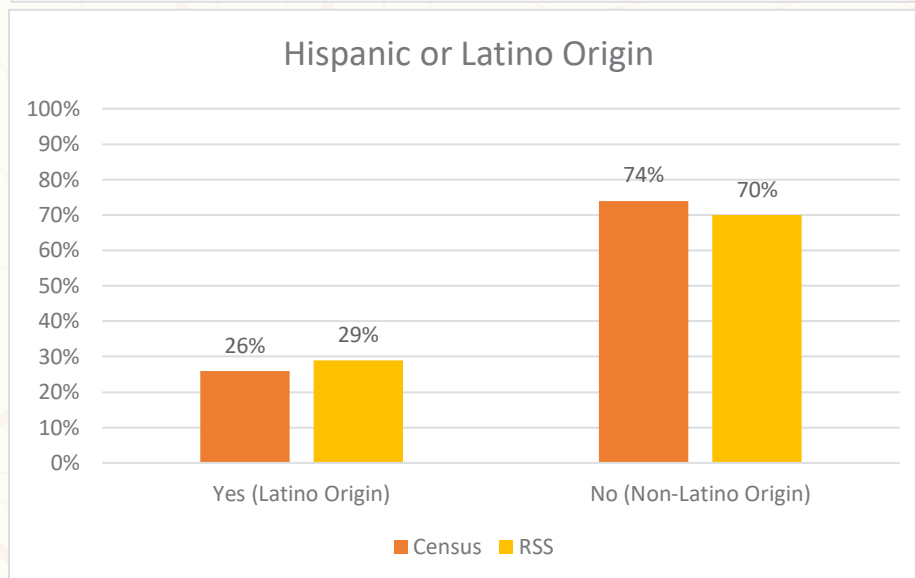
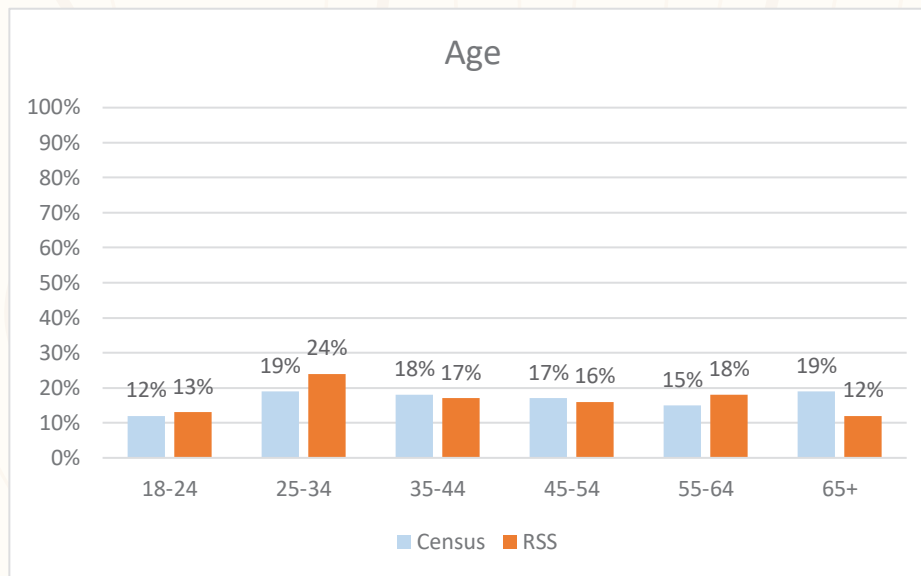
Arizona State Parks and Trails, in partnership with Partners in Brainstorm, conducted a statewide random sample survey (RSS) that is representative of the Arizona population at the state and county or regional levels. This survey informs the Arizona Trails 2020 Plan, which is completed every five years per statute (A.R.S. § 41-511.22 and A.R.S. § 41-511.04 [20]). This is an opportunity to understand the use, concerns and priorities of Arizona's motorized and non-motorized trail users. These data, in conjunction with two other surveys and qualitative material, formed the basis of the Plan, which provides analyses at the state level. This supplementary document contains analyses at the county or region level for Maricopa County. We hope that the following information will be useful to your agency or organization to inform recreation planning efforts, recreation initiatives and requests for additional funding to support trail opportunities and infrastructure renewal.

### Demographics:

The figures below illustrate a comparison of the 2018 Maricopa County Census data estimates with the demographic profile of 1,425 Maricopa County RSS respondents (including motorized, non-motorized and non-users). Data were weighted on two demographic variables: gender and Hispanic origin to better represent the proportion of these groups relative to state and county populations.

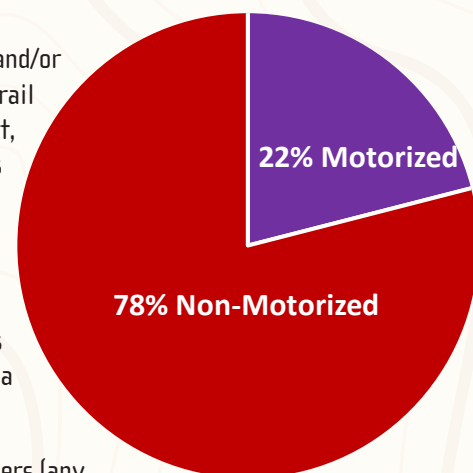






## Maricopa County User Profile:

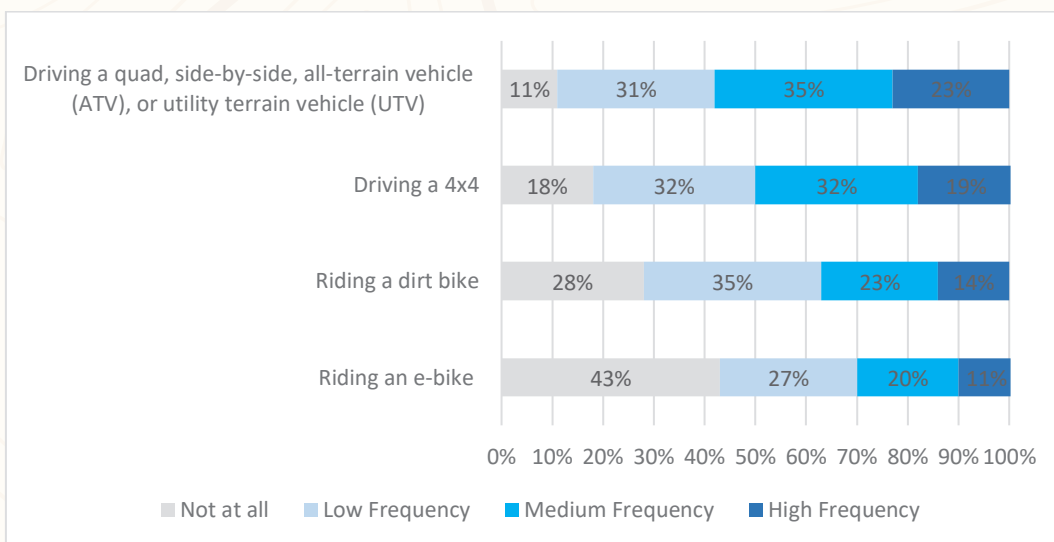
The figures in this report are separated by motorized (such as driving ATVs, 4x4s, dirt bikes and/or e-bikes) and non-motorized (such as hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, kayakers, etc.) trail users. Data below has been rounded to the nearest percentile. For the figures in the report, data are shown as all trail users (motorized and non-motorized users combined) or all users of a specific type (all motorized users or all non-motorized users). In the R55 for Maricopa County, nearly two-thirds of residents (63%) reported participating in either motorized or non-motorized trail activities within the last 12 months. Nearly one-quarter (22%) of these survey respondents reported engaging in motorized activities on trails and 78% of survey respondents participated in non-motorized activities. Survey respondents categorized as non-users either had never used trails for motorized or non-motorized activities in Arizona (20% of sample) or had not used trails within the last 12 months (17%).



Please note that comparisons to the state plan must consider that county reports include all users (any respondent who spent any time within the last 12 months on motorized or non-motorized trail activities), whereas the state trails plan focuses on “core” users. “Core” users reported their trail use was primarily motorized or non-motorized (defined as half or more of their time spent on trails is spent on motorized/non-motorized types of activities). This strategy could not be employed in county or region reports due to smaller cell sizes.

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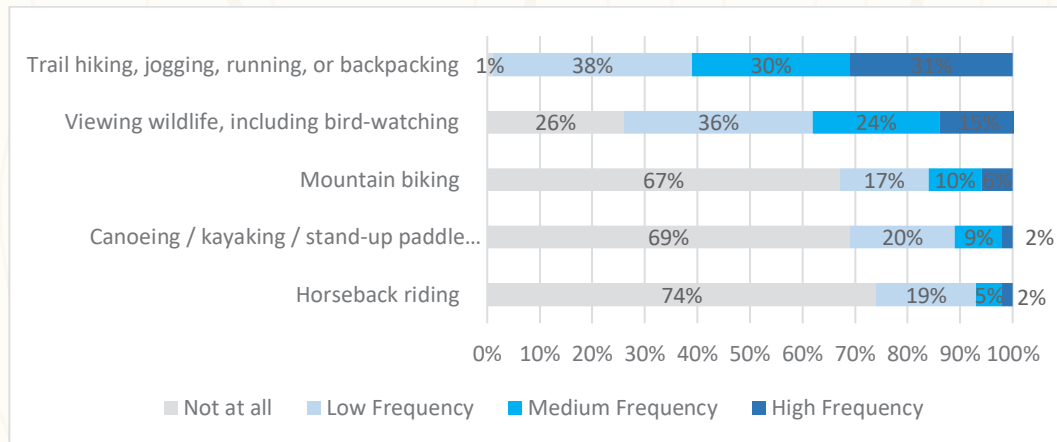
## Motorized Use Type and Frequency



“During the past 12 months, how often have you used trails on public or private lands in Arizona for the following types of motorized recreational activities?”



## Non-Motorized Use Type and Frequency



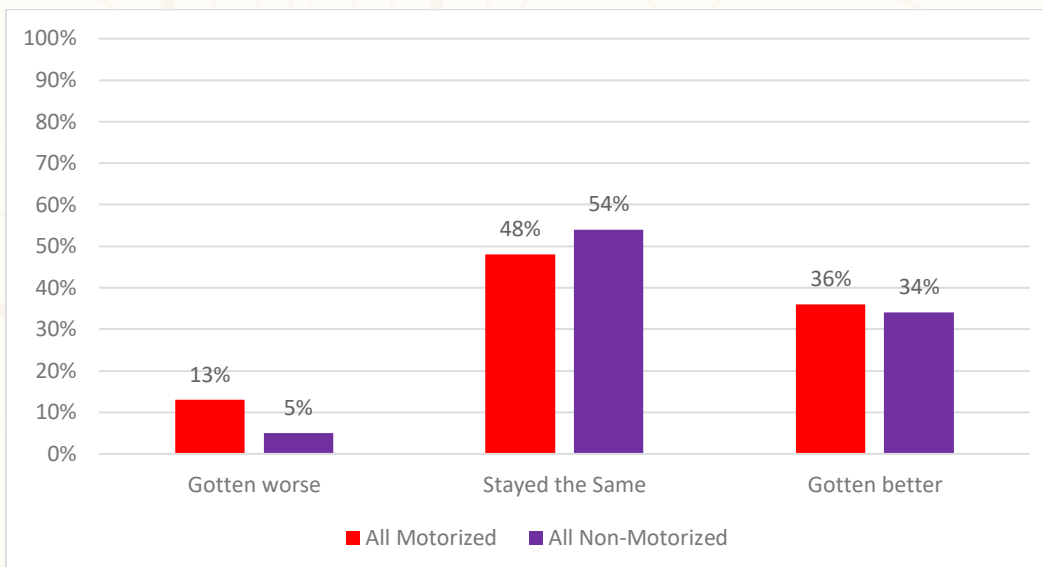
"During the past 12 months, how often have you used trails on public or private lands in Arizona for the following types of non-motorized recreational activities?"

The figures above are Maricopa County's motorized and non-motorized trail use within the last 12 months by type and frequency of activities. High frequency contains the responses: "More often than once a week," "Once a week" and "Every few weeks." Medium frequency contains the responses: "Once a month," and "Every couple of months" and the low frequency category contains the responses "A few times" and "Once." The "Not at all" category depicts the percent of respondents who reported that they had not participated in a particular activity within the last 12 months.

As seen in the figures above and consistent with the state plan, driving a quad, side-by-side, ATV, or UTV was the most popular motorized activity, with 89% of motorized users participating in at least one of these activities at least once during the past year. Riding an e-bike was the least cited activity in the motorized category, but 57% of motorized users still used an e-bike at least once in the last year. This type of recreation is growing, so this number may increase in the coming years.

Hiking, jogging, backpacking and running are by far the most popular non-motorized activities with only 1% of non-motorized users not participating in at least one of these activities during the last 12 months. Viewing wildlife is another popular non-motorized activity, with 75% of respondents participating in this activity within the last 12 months. Finally, between one-third and one-quarter of respondents reported participating in mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking or paddle-boarding or horseback riding on trails within the last 12 months.

## Access to Motorized and Non-motorized Recreation

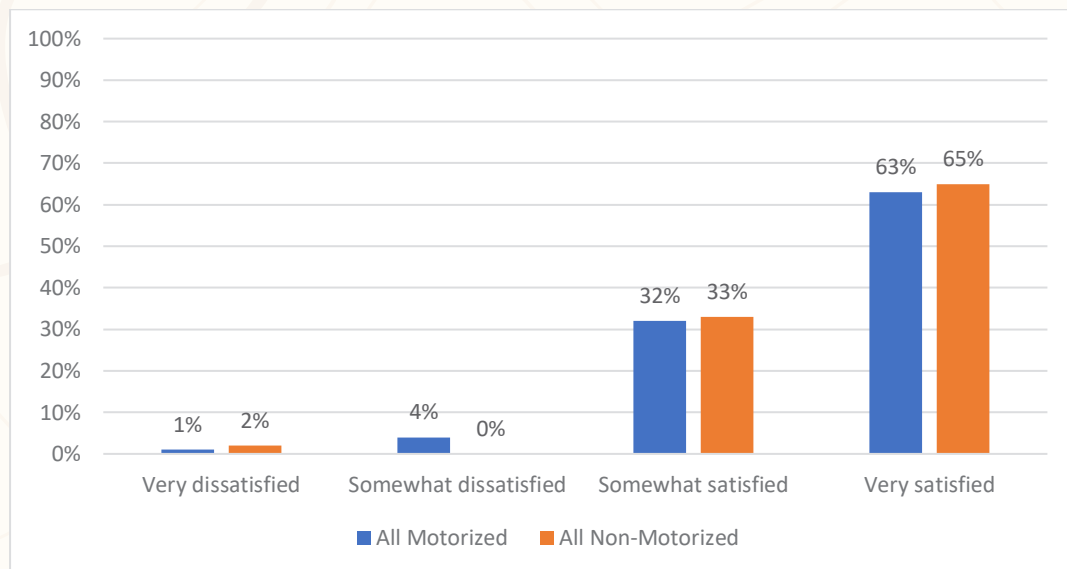


"In the past 5 years, has access to (non-motorized/ motorized) recreation gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?"



Each trail user surveyed was asked if they thought access to the trail type that they use has declined, stayed the same or improved. Access refers to trails in the entire state that the respondent uses, not just trails in Maricopa County. As seen above, 8% more motorized users perceive declining access to trails than non-motorized users, but approximately one-third of each group thought that access has improved.

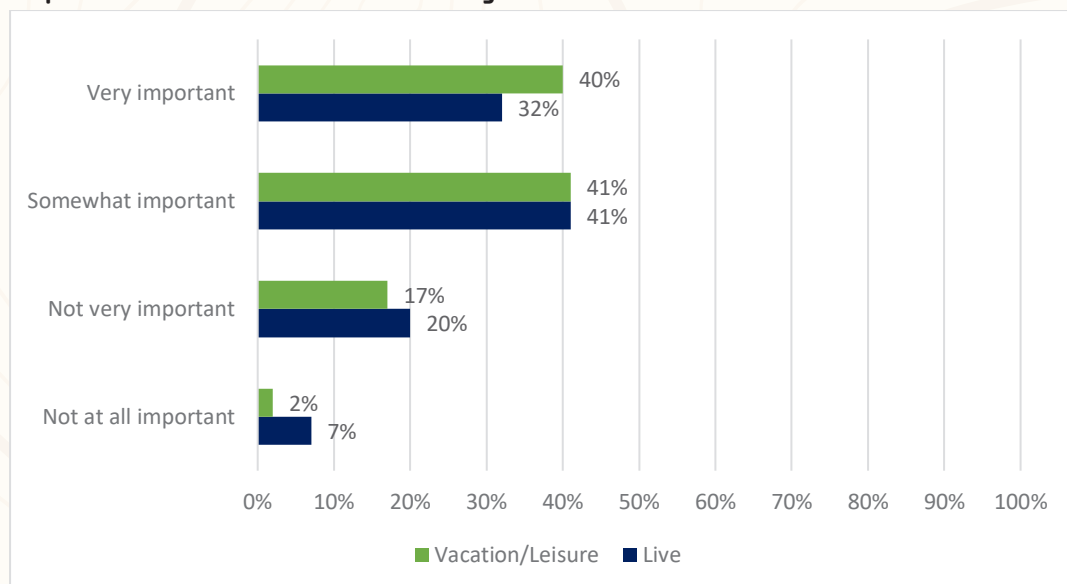
### Satisfaction with Trails in Arizona



"Overall, how satisfied are you with (motorized/non-motorized) trails in Arizona?"

The figure above depicts Maricopa County's motorized and non-motorized trail users' satisfaction with the trails they use statewide. Nearly all users of both types are either somewhat or very satisfied with trails in Arizona (95% of motorized and 98% of non-motorized trail users).

### Importance of Trails in Leisure/Living Destinations - Motorized

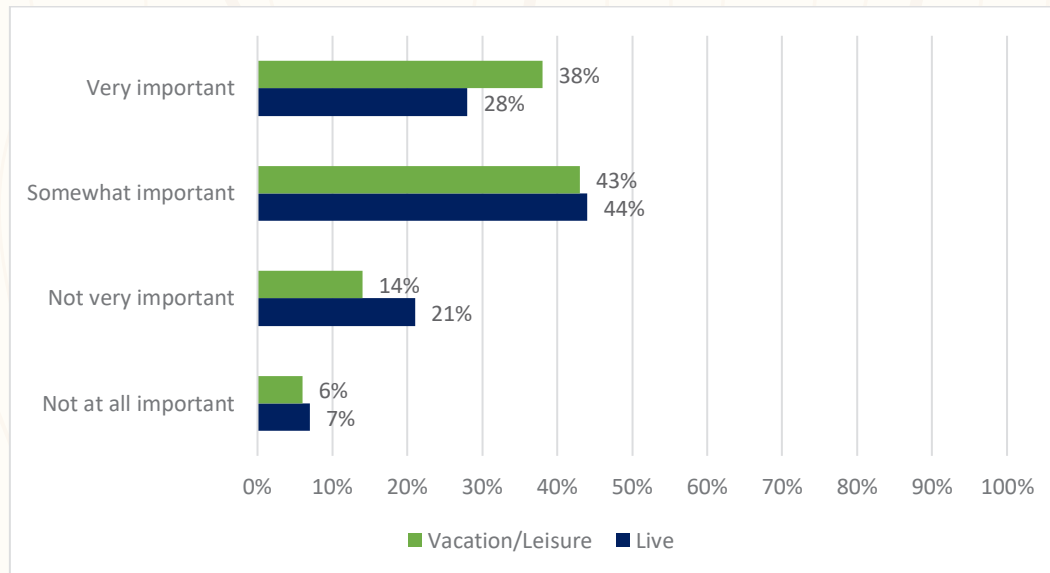


Navy Blue: "How important is it to have trails nearby when deciding where to live in AZ?"

Green: "How important is it to have trails nearby when choosing a destination for vacation or leisure travel in AZ?"



## Importance of Trails in Leisure/Living Destinations - Non-Motorized



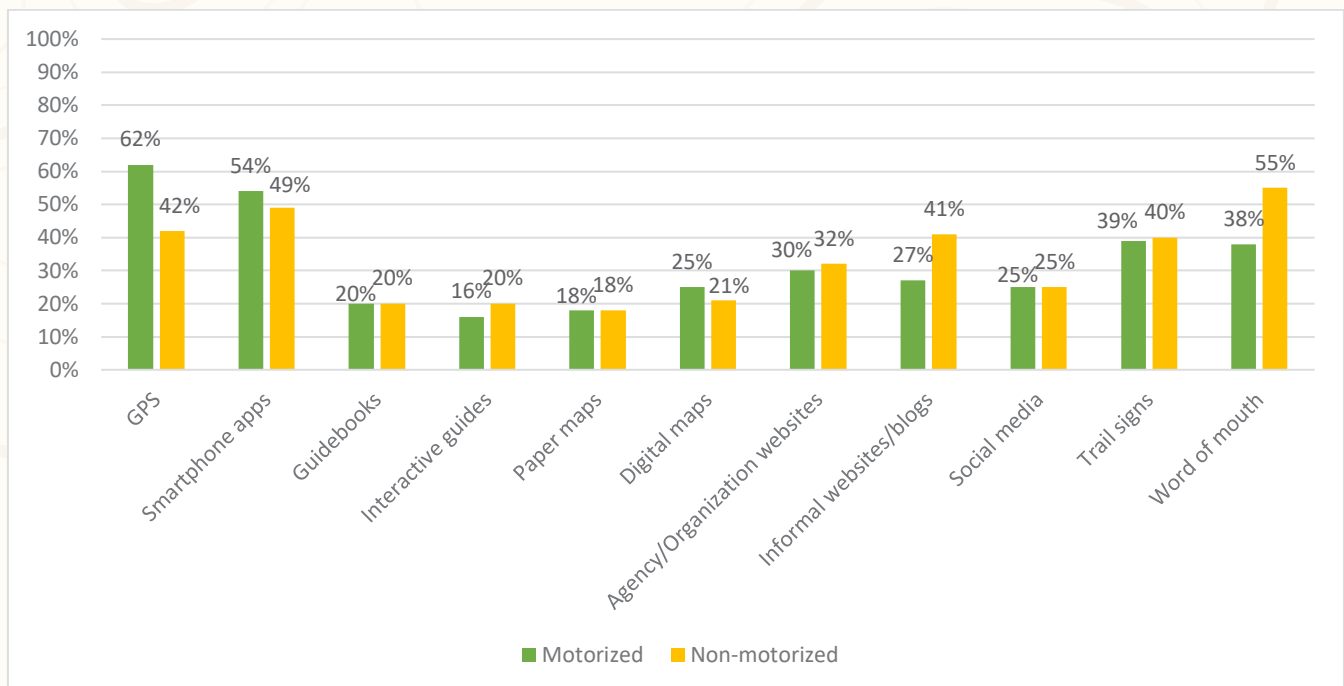
Navy Blue: "How important is it to have trails nearby when deciding where to live in AZ?"

Green: "How important is it to have trails nearby when choosing a destination for vacation or leisure travel in AZ?"

The figures above depict all of Maricopa County's users' (both motorized and non-motorized) views on the importance of trails when deciding on a place to live or travel to for leisure in Arizona. The data shows that trails are an important factor in making these decisions because less than 30% do not find trails important in deciding on where to live for both motorized and non-motorized users and 20% or less of trail users do not find it an important factor for vacation/leisure. This means that the majority of trail users use trail availability as a factor when making these types of decisions, with a slightly higher importance on vacation/leisure destinations having trails available.

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## How Trail Users Find Trails



"Which of the following tools do you use to find and use trails in Arizona?"

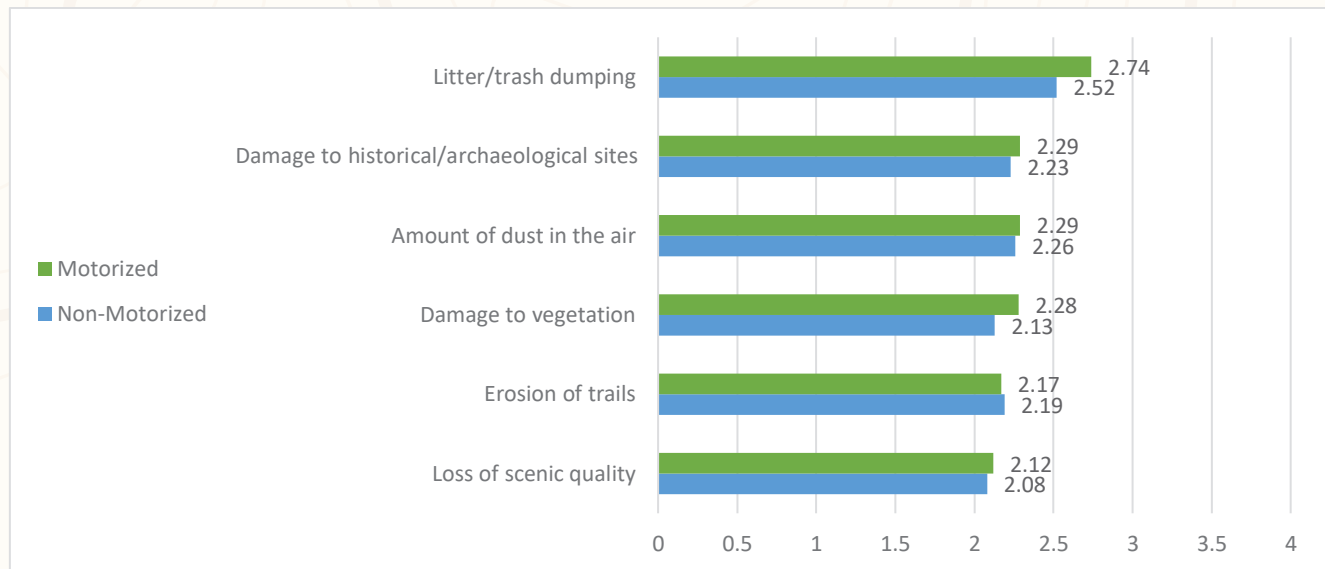


As seen on the previous page, both motorized and non-motorized trail users employ a host of tools to find and use trails. Motorized users in Maricopa County most often use GPS at 64%, smartphone apps (54%), trail signs (39%) and word of mouth (38%). Non-motorized users (55% of those surveyed) rely heavily on word of mouth and other popular tools a little less, such as smartphone apps (49%), GPS (42%), informal websites/blogs from other users (41%) and trail signs (40%). This information can help understand users preferences in order to reach them on platforms that they frequently use.

### User Concerns and Management Priorities:

The next three figures compare all of Maricopa County's motorized and non-motorized trail users' mean ratings of trail-related issues on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 "not a problem" to 4 "a serious problem" for environmental and social concerns and 1 equals "not important" to 4 equals "very important" for trail management priorities. The concerns and priorities are in order from highest (top of figure) to lowest (bottom of figure) importance to motorized users. Finally, because the number of respondents in a given category continues to decrease as the original sample is divided into subgroups, please note that findings below may not reflect a sufficient number of cases to make a statement that is generalizable to the experiences of all users within the county.

### Environmental Concerns of Trail Users



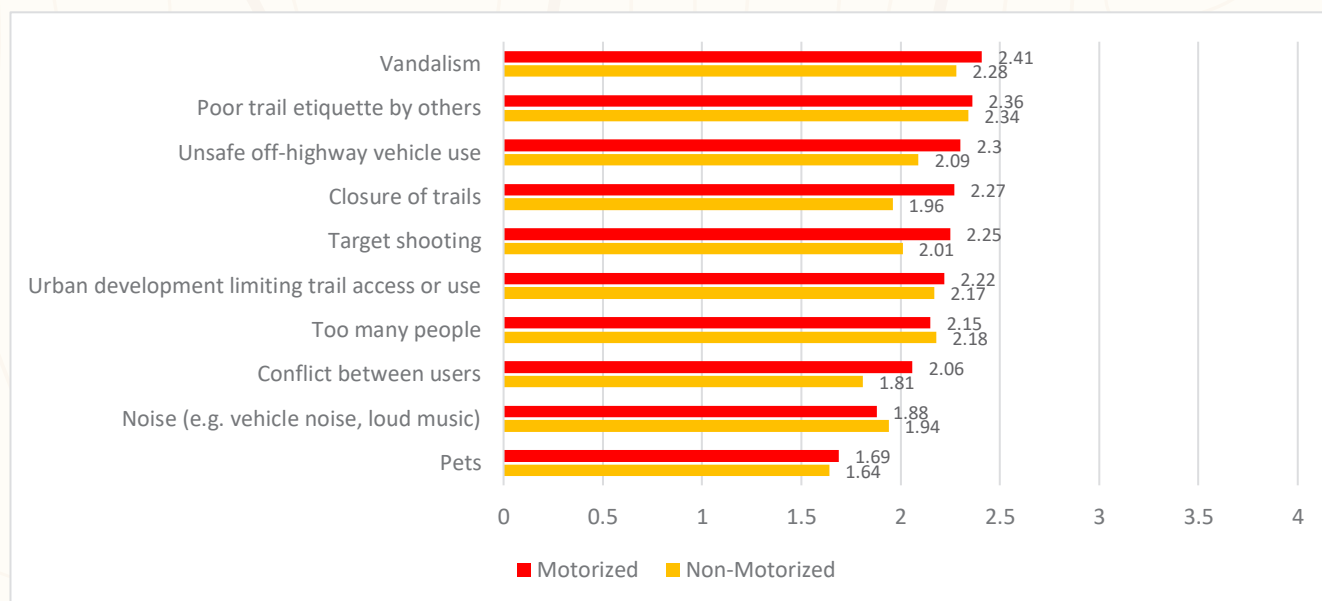
"Thinking about possible environmental and cultural conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?"

As seen above, the environmental concerns of both non-motorized and motorized trail users are very similar. Mean ratings indicate that the number one concern for both groups is litter/trash dumping. Although the second and third highest means differed between user types, the top three concerns are consistent across groups. The second highest mean was the amount of dust in the air for both groups, however for motorized users, damage to historical/archaeological sites had the same mean rating. For non-motorized users, damage to historical and archaeological sites was the third-highest mean whereas damage to vegetation occupied this position for motorized users. It is interesting to note that motorized trail users mean ratings are higher than non-motorized users mean ratings on all of the environmental issues above, except erosion of trails. Also, contrary to some opinions shared in survey open-ended comments and public comments submitted, ranking of mean ratings above indicate that, in general, trail users who engage in motorized activities are concerned with damage to environmental and cultural resources on and around trails.





## Social Concerns of Trail Users



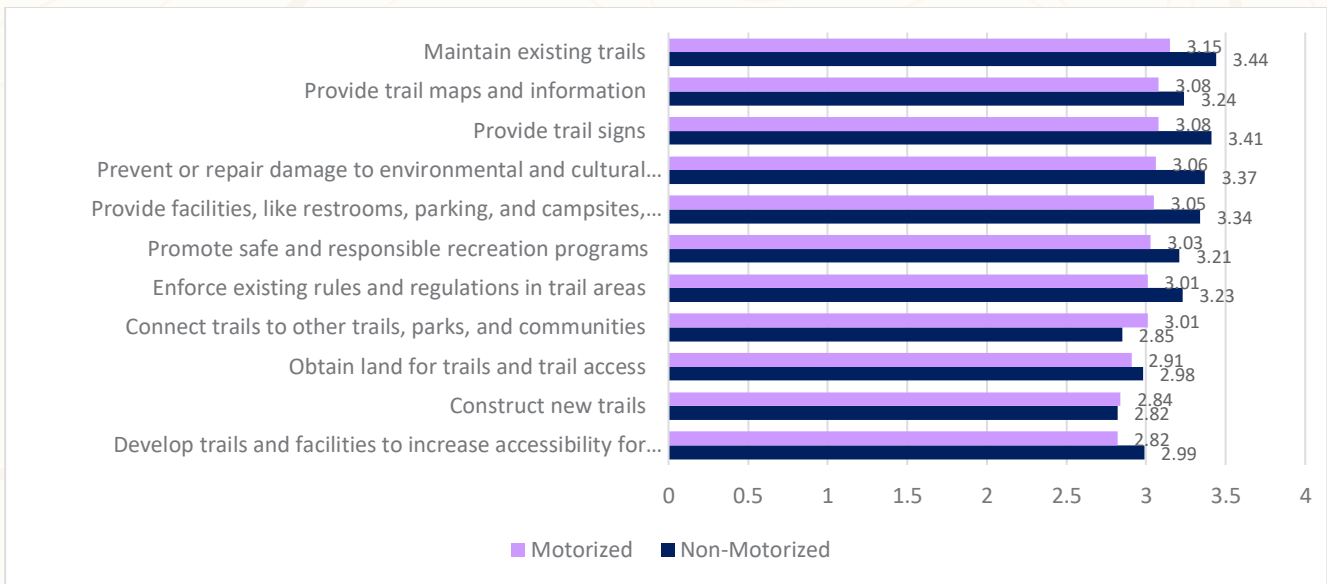
"Thinking about possible social conditions that might negatively affect your trail experience, how much of a problem is each of the following on the Arizona trails you use most for recreation activities?"

The above figure shows the rankings of social issues on trails by motorized and non-motorized users. An interesting finding related to these concerns is that means for motorized users are generally higher across most of the issues than for non-motorized users, suggesting that the issues above received more responses at the top end of the scale (4=Very important) than for non-motorized users. This pattern is similar in the environmental concerns figure above. Motorized users' top social concern is vandalism while non-motorized users' top concern is poor trail etiquette by others. Both groups mean ratings indicate that the other group's top concern is their second highest concern. Non-motorized users mean ratings indicate that too many people on trails is the third highest concern while unsafe off-highway vehicle use had the third highest mean for motorized users.

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## Management Priorities of Trails Users



"How important to you are the following trail management priorities?"

The above figure depicts the management priorities of each user group. Non-motorized users' mean ratings are almost all higher than the motorized group which is the opposite pattern of the social and environmental concerns above. While maintaining existing trails is each group's top management priority mean, groups differ after that. Providing trail signs is non-motorized users' second highest mean rating while providing trail maps and information is motorized users' second highest mean.

The findings above can help counties and regions to plan, seek and allocate resources for motorized and non-motorized trail recreation. However, it must be noted that the data for this plan was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is likely to have impacted the incidence of recreation participation on trails within the state. The information from this and the statewide plan may then be used as a baseline for future studies to identify impacts of COVID-19 on trail-related recreation.







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